

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4551
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
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AMEMBASSY LISBON
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 MADRID 05141

BRUSSELS ALSO FOR USEEC

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, SP
SUBJECT: THE RIGHT: DOWN, BUT NOT OUT

1. SUMMARY: THE RELATIVE QUIET ON THE SPANISH RIGHT SHOULD NOT OBSCURE THE FACT THAT THE RIGHT, HOWEVER ONE CHOOSES TO DEFINE IT, STILL PLAYS AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN SPANISH POLITICS, AND IS CERTAIN TO CONTINUE TO DO SO. AT FIRST GLANCE, SPANISH CONSERVATISM MIGHT SEEM TO HAVE DONE DISMALLY IN THE JUNE 1977 ELECTIONS AND TO BE REPRESENTED IN THE CONGRESS ONLY BY THE 16 DEPUTIES OF ALIANZA POPULAR (OUT OF 350). BUT SPAIN'S "SOCIOLOGICAL" RIGHT ALSO INCLUDES MUCH OF UCD'S CONSTITUENCY AS WELL. THE VAST MAJORITY OF THE SPANISH RIGHT SUPPORTS, OR AT LEAST HAS BEEN WILLING TO ACCEPT, CONFIDENTIAL

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THE FAR-REACHING POLITICAL REFORMS EFFECTED BY THE KING AND SUAREZ; IN THIS SENSE MOST OF THE RIGHT HAS BEEN PART OF THE LARGER CONSENSUS ON THE POLITICAL TRANSITION. BUT THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC REFORMS OF THE TRANSITION HAVE ALREADY STIMULATED SOME ACTIVITY ON THE RIGHT, AND ONGOING EFFORTS OF THIS SORT, BOTH THROUGH THE ELECTORAL PROCESS AND THE VARIOUS INSTITUTIONS AND PRESSURE GROUPS

COULD PLACE PARTICULAR STRAINS ON THE HETEROGENEOUS UCD, AS IT ATTEMPTS TO STRADDLE CENTER-RIGHT AND CENTER-LEFT. END SUMMARY.

2. IN BROAD SOCIOLOGICAL TERMS, SOME OBSERVERS WOULD DEFINE "THE RIGHT" IN SPAIN TO INCLUDE 50 PERCENT OR MORE OF THE ADULT SPANISH POPULATION. WHETHER OR NOT ONE AGREES WITH THIS ANALYSIS, IT IS CLEAR THAT CONSERVATIVES, BROADLY DEFINED, MAKE UP THE ELECTORATE OF ALIANZA POPULAR (AP -- 1,494,693 VOTES), A SIGNIFICANT PART -- PERHAPS A MAJORITY -- OF UCD'S (6,220,889 VOTES), AND CONCEIVABLY EVEN A SMALL PART OF THE SOCIALISTS', SINCE CONSERVATISM IS NOT PURELY A CLASS PHENOMENON. MOREOVER, IN ADDITION TO THE IMPERATIVES OF CONSTITUENCY POLITICS, ALL OF THE MAJOR POLITICAL ACTORS, INCLUDING THE COMMUNISTS, HAVE FULLY RECOGNIZED THE POTENTIAL POLITICAL WEIGHT OF CONSERVATIVE SPAIN, BOTH AT THE BALLOT BOX AND IN INSTITUTIONAL TERMS, AND THE ATTITUDES OF THE RIGHT HAVE THEREFORE BEEN AN IMPORTANT FACTOR CONDITIONING THE SPANISH TRANSITION.

3. IN TERMS OF DIRECT, ORGANIZED POLITICAL PARTICIPATION, THE RIGHT IN SPAIN EFFECTIVELY BEGINS WITH THE GOVERNING UCD ITSELF. UCD LEADERS MAKE NO BONES ABOUT THE FACT THAT MUCH OF THEIR CONSTITUENCY -- THE SO-CALLED CENTER-RIGHT SEGMENT -- IS FUNDAMENTALLY CONSERVATIVE (THOUGH CONFIDENTIAL

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NOT REACTIONARY). AS A RESULT THEY ACCEPT THE NECESSITY OF BALANCING THEIR REFORMIST INITIATIVES WITH A COMPENSATING EMPHASIS ON CONTINUITY.

4. THE COMPOSITION OF UCD'S ELECTORATE, NATURALLY ENOUGH, ALSO IS REFLECTED WITHIN THE LEADERSHIP OF THE PARTY ITSELF, WHERE A RELATIVELY LARGE NUMBER OF UCD PARLIAMENTARIANS, FOR EXAMPLE, ARE FUNDAMENTALLY QUITE CONSERVATIVE, DIFFERING LITTLE ON MOST ISSUES FROM THE MORE PROGRESSIVE MEMBERS OF THEIR RIGHT OPPOSITION, FRAGA'S AP. OF COURSE, CATEGORIZING UCD IS DIFFICULT IN VIEW OF ITS HETEROGENEITY GENERALLY AND THE FACT THAT THE SET OF ATTITUDES HELD BY ANY PARTICULAR PARTY MEMBER OFTEN IS RATHER BROAD AND COMPLEX. MANY FORMER REGIME FIGURES, FOR EXAMPLE, TEND TO BE CONSERVATIVE POLITICALLY BUT QUITE PROGRESSIVE, EVEN VAGUELY LEFTIST, ON SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ISSUES, WHILE MANY OF UCD'S LIBERALS ARE QUITE PROGRESSIVE POLITICALLY, BUT TEND TO BE CONSERVATIVE ECONOMICALLY.

5. AS A CONSEQUENCE, THE IMPORTANCE TO UCD OF ITS CONSERVATIVE CONSTITUENCY IS AN UNAVOIDABLE FACT OF

POLITICAL LIFE. THE INTRAMURAL DEBATE OF COURSE
PERSISTS OVER WHETHER UCD SHOULD CONTINUE TO HOLD
THE POLITICAL TERRAIN IT PRESENTLY OCCUPIES, OR SHOULD
SHIFT TO THE LEFT OR TILT TO THE RIGHT. BUT SUAREZ
CONTINUES TO INSIST THAT UCD BRACKETS CENTER-LEFT
AND CENTER-RIGHT, AND SO LONG AS THIS IS THE CASE,
THE PARTY WILL CONTINUE TO BE ATTENTIVE TO A RELATIVELY
BROAD RANGE OF POLITICAL INTERESTS AND ASPIRATIONS,
A GOOD PART OF WHICH WILL EMANATE FROM FUNDAMENTALLY
CONSERVATIVE TERRITORY.

6. IN THAT VERY THIN SLICE OF POLITICAL TURF THAT

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BRUSSELS ALSO FOR USEEC

SEPARATES UCD FROM AP (IF INDEED SUCH POLITICAL
SPACE EXISTS AT ALL), TWO FORMER GOVERNMENT FIGURES,
EX-FOREIGN MINISTER JOSE MARIA DE AREILZA (COUNT OF
MOTRICO) AND EX-PRESIDENCY MINISTER ALFONSO OSORIO,
ARE ATTEMPTING TO PARLAY WEAK HANDS INTO A RETURN
TO THE POLITICAL BIG LEAGUES. BOTH ACTS ARE ALMOST
ENTIRELY ONE-MAN SHOWS, SINCE NEITHER HAS A DEMONSTRATED
ELECTORAL BASE OR PARTY MACHINE, ALTHOUGH AREILZA
HAS THROWN TOGETHER A GROUP OF LIBERAL SMALL-FRY,

"LIBERAL CITIZENS ACTION" (ACL), AS HIS PUTATIVE POLITICAL PLATFORM. WHILE BOTH MEN HAVE A CONSERVATIVE CAST, NEITHER APPEARS TO DIFFER PROGRAMMATICALLY WITH THE GOVERNMENT IN ANY MEANINGFUL WAY, A FACT WHICH FURTHER EMPHASIZES THE PERSONALISTIC NATURE OF THEIR "REENTRY" EFFORTS. NEITHER IS A SERIOUS CHALLENGER TO SUAREZ, CONFIDENTIAL

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ALTHOUGH BOTH CAN ACT AS A DRAG ON UCD'S EFFORTS TO ATTAIN GREATER INTERNAL COHERENCE AND CONSISTENCY, AND AREILZA CONTINUES TO HOLD HIMSELF OUT AS THE NEAREST THING TO A VIABLE IN-HOUSE ALTERNATIVE TO THE PRIME MINISTER. OTHER STIRRINGS IN THIS AREA INCLUDE THE RECENTLY FORMED NDE ("NEW SPANISH RIGHT") COALITION OF VARIOUS MINOR CONSERVATIVE GROUPINGS (BOTH MADRID-BASED AND REGIONAL), AND AN EFFORT TO BUILD, OFF THE ADE ("SPANISH DEMOCRATIC ACTION") OF AP FEDERATION PRESIDENT SILVA MUNOZ, A COLLECTION OF CONSERVATIVE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC MINI-PARTIES. NDE ORGANIZERS HOPE THESE CD GROUPS WILL JOIN IN THEIR COALITION. THE LONGER-RANGE HOPES OF SOME CONSERVATIVES IS THAT AP, AREILZA, OSORIO, NDE AND THE CD GROUPS WOULD ALL COME TOGETHER TO FORM A SO-CALLED "NEW SPANISH MAJORITY" AND MEETINGS BETWEEN THE MAJOR FIGURES ARE CURRENTLY TAKING PLACE REGULARLY. 7. THE SERIOUS CONSERVATIVE OPPOSITION TO THE GOVERNMENT REMAINS FRAGA'S AP, THE FOURTH ELECTORAL FORCE IN THE COUNTRY, AFTER UCD, THE SOCIALISTS, AND (BY A SMALL MARGIN) THE COMMUNISTS. AP VICTIMIZED ITSELF WITH AN EXTREMELY CONSERVATIVE, LAW-AND-ORDER-ORIENTED AND BACKWARD-LOOKING (I.E. TOWARD FRANCO) CAMPAIGN IN 1977. THIS, COMBINED WITH SUAREZ' EFFECTIVE INCUMBENCY AND HIS ABILITY TO ATTRACT HEAVY SUPPORT FROM THE MODERN RIGHT, CUT DEEPLY INTO THE SUPPORT FRAGA THOUGHT WOULD BE HIS. AP HAS NOW RESPONDED BY ATTEMPTING TO DISCARD ITS RIGHTIST IMAGE, ACCENTUATE ITS PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATISM, AND ATTEMPT TO LAY CLAIM TO THE POLITICAL CENTER-RIGHT. THIS EFFORT TO SECURE GREATER ELECTORAL ACCEPTANCE BY APPEALING TO CONSERVATIVES WHOM AP FRIGHTENED AWAY WITH ITS CAMPAIGN PERFORMANCE, AND WHO WERE LURED BY THE DISCREET CHARM OF THE OPTION ALREADY IN POWER, HAS BEEN ACCOMPANIED BY A CONCERTED EFFORT ON CONFIDENTIAL

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FRAGA'S PART TO SHARE POWER BY LURING SUAREZ, WHO IS SEEKING A STABLE PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY, INTO COALITION WITH AP.

8. SUAREZ CONTINUES TO DEFLECT FRAGA'S BLANDISHMENTS BECAUSE OF THE POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF LINKING UP WITH AP -- AS TRANSPORTATION MINISTER SANCHEZ TERAN SAID RECENTLY, THE "GRAN DERECHA" CAN LEAD ONLY TO THE "GRAN IZQUIERDA" -- AND DUE TO THE PRIME MINISTER'S DESIRE TO CONTINUE TO HOLD THE CENTER, NOT ONLY IN ORDER TO PREVENT POLITICAL POLARIZATION BUT ALSO TO ENHANCE UCD'S ABILITY TO ATTRACT VOTES AWAY FROM THE PSOE. FRAGA'S OVERTURES ARE CERTAIN TO PERSIST, HOWEVER, AND THEY WILL CONTINUE TO PRODUCE AN ATTRACTION-AVOIDANCE RESPONSE WITHIN UCD. WHILE SOME ON THE RIGHT OF UCD SEE SUCH AN ALLIANCE AS NOT ONLY NATURAL BUT CLARIFYING, THOSE ON THE LEFT OF UCD VIEW IT AS ANATHEMA. IN FACT, FINANCE MINISTER FERNANDEZ ORDONEZ RECENTLY STATED TO THE PRESS, "THE DAY THAT UCD FORMS THE GRAN DERECHA WITH AP, I WILL NO LONGER BE A MEMBER OF UCD." AS LONG AS IT IS BLOCKED FROM COALITION, AP WILL KEEP HOPING TO DRAW OFF UCD'S MORE CONSERVATIVE SUPPORT INTO ITS OWN RANKS.

9. TO THE RIGHT OF AP, AND NOT LINKED IN ANY WAY WITH IT, IS THE EXTRA-PARLIAMENTARY FAR-RIGHT, CONSISTING LARGELY OF BLAS PINAR'S VIOLENCE-PRONE FUERZA NUEVA, WHICH HAS NO ELECTORAL IMPORTANCE BUT RETAINS A FAIR AMOUNT OF TROUBLEMAKING CAPACITY. FUERZA NUEVA CONTINUES TO MACHINATE AROUND THE POLITICAL FRINGES, ATTEMPTING TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ANY DEMONSTRATED GOVERNMENTAL WEAKNESS OR MORE GENERALIZED POLITICAL DISORIENTATION. TRADING ON THE MEMORY OF FRANCO, AND PLAYING ON FEAR AND UNCERTAINTY, THE NEO-FASCIST FAR-RIGHT'S STRENGTH

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BRUSSELS ALSO FOR USEEC

DEPENDS ESSENTIALLY ON THE HEALTH OF THE SPANISH POLITY
GENERALLY. SO LONG AS THE TRANSITION CONTINUES FAIRLY
SMOOTHLY, BLAS PINAR AND HIS COHORTS WILL BE CONSIGNED
TO WAITING FOR TARGETS OF OPPORTUNITY THAT SELDOM COME.

10. BUT THE ORGANIZED POLITICAL RIGHT, PARTICULARLY
AP AND A SECTOR OF UCD, DOES NOT, OF COURSE, JUST
REPRESENT AND RESPOND TO THE OFTEN INCHOATE CONCERNS --
PUBLIC ORDER, INFLATION, ETC. -- OF THE MORE CONSERVATIVE
MAN IN THE STREET. UCD AND AP ALSO MUST BE ATTUNED TO
IMPORTANT SPANISH INSTITUTIONS THROUGH WHICH MANY OF
THE INTERESTS OF CONSERVATIVE SPAIN ARE ARTICULATED,
AND WHICH REPRESENT BOTH AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE
POLITICAL STRENGTH AND COMPETITION GROUND FOR THE PARTIES
THAT APPEAL TO THE RIGHT. THESE INSTITUTIONS RANGE FROM
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THE MILITARY AND THE CHURCH THROUGH THE BANKING COMMUNITY
AND THE INCREASINGLY WELL ORGANIZED BUSINESS/EMPLOYERS
SECTOR (E.G., FERRER'S CEOE). THEY ARE IMPORTANT
CONSTITUENCIES IN THEMSELVES FOR WHOSE SUPPORT UCD AND
AP CONTEST:

-- THE MILITARY IN A SPECIAL SENSE, BECAUSE WHAT
IT MIGHT BE CAPABLE OF DOING CONDITIONS ALL OF SPANISH
POLITICS;

-- THE CHURCH BECAUSE SPAIN'S LARGE POPULATION
OF PRACTICING CATHOLICS, WITH ITS OWN SPECIAL INTERESTS
AND CONCERNS, SUCH AS CONTINUING STATE SUPPORT FOR CHURCH
SCHOOLS, IS A CRITICALLY IMPORTANT COMPONENT OF BOTH
UCD'S AND AP'S ELECTORATE; AND

-- THE BANKS AND BUSINESS SECTORS BECAUSE THEIR
ATTITUDES ARE FUNDAMENTAL TO SPANISH ECONOMIC PROGRESS,
ON WHICH POLITICAL SUCCESS DEPENDS, AND ALSO BECAUSE
THEIR ECONOMIC SUPPORT CAN BE CRUCIAL TO BOTH PARTIES'
FINANCIAL VIABILITY.

11. THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC REFORMS OF THE TRANSITION
PROCESS HAVE ALREADY ENGAGED THE SPECIFIC INTERESTS

OF THESE INSTITUTIONS, AND THE BANKS AND BUSINESS COMMUNITY IN PARTICULAR, WITH THE CEOE IN THE FOREFRONT, HAVE TAKEN AN ACTIVE AND AT TIMES HIGH-PROFILE ROLE IN THE TREATMENT OF ISSUES AFFECTING THEIR INTERESTS. SUCH ACTIVISM CAN ONLY BE EXPECTED TO CONTINUE AND EVEN INCREASE AS KEY TAX MEASURES AND LABOR LAWS ARE DRAFTED AND ENACTED, AND WILL BE FURTHER STIMULATED IF THE ECONOMY FAILS TO PICK UP. COUPLED WITH ONGOING CONSERVATIVE CONCERNS OVER WHAT THE RIGHT HAS FOR SOME TIME CALLED THE GOVERNMENT'S FAILURE TO GOVERN, SUCH
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ACTIVISM COULD SIGNIFICANTLY INFLUENCE POLITICAL COMPETITION ON THE SPANISH RIGHT, AND MAKE THE UCD'S CENTER-LEFT/CENTER-RIGHT BALANCING ACT INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT TO CARRY OFF.

12. FOR AN UNDETERMINED NUMBER OF PEOPLE WITHIN THE CONSERVATIVE CONSTITUENCY, THE UCD BALANCING ACT AND THE CONTINUED FAILURE OF THE AP TO TURN ITS EFFORTS AT IMAGE TRANSFORMATION INTO APPARENT POLITICAL EFFICACY APPEAR TO MEAN THAT THEY ARE DE FACTO UNREPRESENTED POLITICALLY. JUST HOW MANY FEEL LET DOWN, EITHER BY THE AP'S FAILURE TO DO AS WELL AS ONCE EXPECTED OR BY THE UCD'S EVIDENTLY GREATER ATTENTION TO ITS LEFT FLANK, IS IMPOSSIBLE TO MEASURE AT THIS TIME. WE NOTE NOW ONLY THAT WHILE THE RIGHT AT THE MOMENT HAS NO UNIFIED AND COHERENT POLITICAL VEHICLE, IT IS ALIVE, EVEN WELL, AND DISPOSED TO PROTECT ITSELF. EATON

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